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Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 ARA-16 IO-14 NEA-10

AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15

ACDA-19 DPW-01 EB-11 TRSE-00 AGR-20 EUR-25 (ISO) W
---------- 034015
R 111040Z MAR 74 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2532
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 3199

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: OVIP
SUBJECT: DEPSEC'S VISIT TO SAIGON

1. FOLLOWING IS CLEARED SUMMARY OF DEPSEC'S CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BAC MARCH6.

2. INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION AND RECOGNITION: FOREIGN MINISTER BAC OUTLINED GVN EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN ITS FOREIGN RELATIONS AND COUNTER PRG TACTICS WHICH HAD HAD SOME SUCCESS IN THIRD WORLD AREAS WHICH GVN HAD NEGLECTED, HE FELT. BAC LEAVES THIS WEEK TO ATTEND INAUGURATION NEW BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT FOLLOWING WHICH HE WILL TRAVEL IN LATIN AMERICA WITH VIEW TO IMPROVING SOUTH VIETNAM'S CONTACTS AND RELATIONS WITH SELECTED COUNTRIES. PARTLY FOR FINANCIAL REASONS, GVN HAS ONLY TWO EMBASSIES IN LATIN AMERICA BUT BAC PLANNING
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TO REPLACE CHARGES WITH AMBASSADORS IN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA

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AND PERHAPS TO ESTABLISH EMBASSIES IN CHILE AND VENEZUELA
IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
ADDITIONALLY ENVOY BEING SENT TO SAUDI ARABIA WITH WHICH GVN
HAS JUST ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE WILL VISIT
NEIGHBORING STATES IN MID EAST AND A VISIT TO AFRICA WILL FOLLOW IN
EFFORT TO DEVELOP FURTHER RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE, CAR, TOGO,
SIERRA LEONE, KENYA, NIGERIA AND PERHAPS OTHERS.
BAC THANKED US FOR ITS SUPPORT IN BARRING PRG FROM LAW OF
WAR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT REMAIN-
KNG CREDENTIALS QUESTION COULD BE SUCCESSFULLY HANDLED. HE CITED
ABOVE MENTIONED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE GVN'S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
AS EXAMPLE OF TAKING INITIATIVE IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN GVN'S
INTERNATIONAL POSITION AND DECREASE PROSPECTS FOR PRG"WRESTING
RECOGNITION" FROM COUNTRIES OR INTERNATIONAL BODIES.

3. EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS: AMBASSADOR MARTIN CREDIT MR. BAC
FOR PERSUADING PRESIDENT THIEU TO CARRY OUT EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS
WITH NORTH VIETNAM. MR BAC EXPLAINED THAT ISSUE HAD BEEN
DEADLOCKED FOR PROCEDURAL REASONS AND WAS READILY EXPLOTIABLE
BY COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA. DEPUTY SECRETARY STATED THAT HE,
PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY HAD BEEN PLEASED AND IMPRESSED BY
COURAGE SHOWN BY SOUTH VIETNAM IN ACCEPTING THE UNEQUAL EXCHANGE
AND NOTED THAT THIS INITIATIVE WOULD STRENGTHEN SOUTH VIETNAM'S
IMAGE IM INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

4. ECONOMIC: BAC ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GVN ECONOMY WAS
SEVERELY STRAINED AND THAT SERIOUS PROBLEMS AROSE FROM
CONFLUENCE OF RISING PRICES FOR ESSENTIAL IMPORTS (FOOD, FER-
TILIZER AND FUEL) AND IMMENSE COST OF MAINTAING ARMY OF MORE
THAN ONE MILLION MEN. BAC FELT NORTH VIETNAM FACING ECONOMIC
DIFFICULTIES AS WELL AND PROBABLY COULD NOT SUSTAIN PRESSURE ON
SOUTH VIETNAM INDEFINITELY.
HOWEVER, SOUTH VIETNAM CRITICALLY NEEDED ADDITIONAL
AMERICAN ASSISTANCE IMMEDIATELY AND WAS HOPEFUL THAT DLF
LOAN COULD BE ARRANGED AND THE GAP CLOSED BETWEEN FY 74 APPRO-
PRIATIONS AND AUTHORIZATION.
DEPUTY SECRETARY STATED THAT EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN FULL AGREE-
MENT AND WOULD EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL
SUPPORT.

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5. SOUTH VIETNAM RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS: MR. BAC DESCRIBED
GVN RELATIONS WITH ITS OTHER NEIGHBORS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.
CAMBODIA WAS A MAIN WORRY WITH SHELLING OF PHNOM PENH HAVING
MORALE BACKLASH IN VIETNAM SINCE IT SUGGESTED A SET BACK IN
THE ANTI- COMMUNIST CAUSE. SOUTH VIETNAM WAS WATCHING CLOSELY TO
SEE IN WHAT DIRECTION THE NEW THAI GOVERNMENT WOULD GO, BUT HAD
NOT LET CHANGES THERE AFFECTS ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS. MR BAC
UNHAPPY WITH RECENT INDONESIAN ACTIONS ON TWO SCORES: MALIK'S

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CRITICISM OF SOUTH VIETNAM ACTIVITIES IN PARACEL/SPRATLY
ISLANDS AND SUPPORT FOR PRG CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY; AND GOI VOTE FOR
PRG AT LAW OF WAR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA WHICH IN STRIKING
CONTRAST TO INDONESIAM WALKOUT FROM GEORGETOWN NON-ALIGNED
CONFERENCE IN 1972 ON THE SAME ISSUE.
DEPUTY SECRETARY COMMENTED THAT IN CONVERSATION IN JAKARTA
HE HAD NOT DETECTED ANY INDONESIAN ANIMUS AGAINST SOUTH
VIETNAM. HE HAD PROTESTED GOI VOTE IN GENEVA TO BOTH SUHARTO AND
MALIK. LATTER CLAIMED THAT INDONESIAN VOTE DID NOT SIGNAL ANY
INTENTION TO RECOGNIZE PRG BUT RATHER RLECTED DESIRE TO
HAVE PRG BOUND BY LAW OF WAR AGREEMENTS.
FOREIGN MINISTER NOTED THAT PRESENT AUSTRALIA AND NEW
ZEALAND GOVERNMENTS HAD BEEN LESS THAN FRIENDLY TO SOUTH VIETNAM
AND ASKED WHETHER QUESTION OF US BASES IN AREA HAD BEEN
RAISED IN WELLINGTON OR CANBERRA.
MR RUSH REPLIED THAT IT HAD NOT AND REVIEWED RECENT ANZUS
MEETING, NOTING AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND DETERMINATION TO
KEEP ANZUS ALLIANCE ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE AND BROADENED TO IN-
CLUDE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MATTERS. HE ALSO NOTED AUSTRALIAN
AND NEW ZEALAND STRONG INTEREST IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

6. INTERNAL SITUATION: MR BAC COMMENTED THAT MILITARY SITUATION
IN SOUTH VIETNAM WAS LESS SERIOUS THAN ECONOMIC SITUATION.
SOUTH VIETNAM HAD NOT CREATED PARACEL ISSUE BUT IT HAD HELPED
THE GOVERNMENT IN CREATING GENUINE POPULAR ISSUE BUT IT HAD
HELPED THE GOVERNMENT IN CREATING GENUINE POPULAR ANGER AT PRC AND
AROUSING CONSIDERABLE NATIONALIST FERVOR. IN RESPONSE TO
COMMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARTIN, MR BAC SAID THAT IMPORTANCE OF
"THIRD FORCE" MOVEMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM HAD BEEN GROSSLY EXAGG-
ERATED BY THE PRESS AND THAT COMMUNIST EFFORTS TO MAKE POLITICAL
CAPITAL ON THIS ISSUE HAD GOT NO WHERE. VIET CONG HAD HE FELT
INCREASED THEIR MILITARY CAPABILITES BUT NOT THEIR POLITICAL
INFLUENCE. THEIR FAILURE TO MAKE INROADS, ESPECIALLY IN CITIES
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HAD CAUSED THEM TO REVERT TO THEIR FORMER TACTIC OF KIDNAPPING
VILLAGERS.
MR BAC ADDED HOWEVER THAT UPCOMING ECAFE MEETING IN
SRILANKA AND A LATER WHO MEETING COULD POSE MAJOR TESTS OF
STRENGTH ON PRG RECOGNITION AND HE WAS FORMULATING STRATEGY
FOR DEALING WITH THESE MATTERS.
US (MR RUSH AND MR HUMMEL) AFFIRMED US SUPPORT FOR
SOUTH VIETNAM IN THESE EFFORTS. MR HUMMEL ASKED WHETHER USE
COULD BE MADE OF FACT NORTH VIETNAM WAS UNWILLING TO ACCREDIT
AN AMBASSADOR TO THE PRG.
MR BAC SAID PRG ALSO HAS NO DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN
HANOI BUT GVN DOES NOT WANT TO USE THIS POINT BECAUSE IT WOULD
INVOLVE SAYING PRG IS A STATE. IN THIS CONNECTION DEPUTY
SECRETARY WONDERED HOW HANOI RECONCILED ITS POSITION IN SUPPORT
OF PRG AS A SOVEREIGN MEMBER OF INTERNATONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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WITH ITS CONTENTION THAT VIETNAM SHOULDBE ONE STATE UNDER ONE GOVERNMENT.

7. ICCS: MR HUMMEL EXPRESSED US CONCERN ABOUT CONTRIBUTIONS TO ICCS AND ASKED WHETHER GVN WOULD MAKE ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION. FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT SINCE NEITHER NORTH VIETNAM NOR PRG CONTRIBUTED ITS FAIR SHARE, IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR GVN TO DO SO.
BOTH MR RUSH AND MR HUMMEL EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE TO US AND GVN OF CONTINUANCE OF ICCS DESPITE ITS IMPERFECTIONS. WE HAD COMMUNICATED THIS TO OTHER PARTIES MOST RECENTLY TO INDONESIA TOGETHER WITH OBSERVATION THAT DEMISE OF ICCS WOULD REPRESENT VICTORY FOR NORTH VIETNAM. MR HUMMEL CONCLUDED THEREFORE THAT IT WOULD STRENGTHEN US ABILITY TO PRESS THE OTHER SIDE IF GVN COULD MAKE FURTHER PAYMENT. MR BAC CONCURRED AND STATED HE WOULD MAKE THAT POINT TO THE PRESIDENT.
MARTIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RECOGNITION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHMENT, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PERSONNEL TRAVEL, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POW RETURN, TRUC E OBSERVERS, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SAIGON03199
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740071-0320
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740353/aaaabxng.tel
Line Count: 186
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <29 JAN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPSEC'S VISIT TO SAIGON
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, US, VS, PRG, ICCS, (RUSH, KENNETH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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